

Public Affairs Operations



Air Force Doctrine Document 2-5.4
25 October 1999

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FOREWORD

The Air Force conducts public affairs operations to communicate unclassified information about Air Force activities to Air Force, domestic, and international audiences. Activities that are part of these operations include but are not limited to public affairs, musical programs, broadcasting, visual information, combat camera, recruiting, and history and museum programs. Public affairs operations allow commanders to assess the public information environment. They also give commanders the means to take preemptive and active measures to “get in front” of and shape public information’s effect on military operations. *Public affairs operations support the warfighter with capabilities that provide trusted counsel and guidance to leaders about the public information environment, enhance airman morale and readiness to accomplish the mission, gain and maintain public support for military operations, and communicate US resolve in a manner that provides global influence and deterrence.*

Commanders should make public affairs operations part of their information operations (IO) planning. Public affairs operations are part of information-in-warfare (IIW) activities, which collect and disseminate unclassified information, and also may support some information warfare (IW) activities [current restrictions and Department of Defense (DOD) policy make it unlawful to intentionally misinform the US public, Congress, or media about military capabilities and intentions in ways that influence US decision makers and public opinion]. Public affairs operations should be coordinated and deconflicted with IW activities because communication technology can make information simultaneously available to domestic and international audiences. **The synergistic effects of integrating public affairs operations into IO planning significantly enhance a commander’s ability to achieve military objectives.**

AFDD 2-5.4, *Public Affairs Operations*, provides a basis for understanding, planning, and executing this important part of aerospace information operations.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	v
CHAPTER ONE—	
Public Affairs Operations and the Information Environment	1
General	1
Public Affairs Operations	1
Global Information Environment	4
CHAPTER TWO—Operational Integration	
General	7
Integration with Information Operations	7
Roles in Information Operations	7
Information-in-Warfare: Collection and Dissemination	8
Information Warfare: Support and Deconfliction	9
CHAPTER THREE—	
Capabilities, Functions, and Fundamentals	11
General	11
Capabilities	11
Trusted Counsel to Leaders	11
Airman Morale and Readiness	12
Public Trust and Support	13
Global Influence and Deterrence	14
Functions	15
Internal Information	15
Media Relations	16
Community Relations	16
Security Review	16
Fundamentals of Information	17
Tell the Truth	17
Provide Timely Information	17
Include the Media	18
Practice Security at the Source	19
Provide Consistent Information at All Levels	19
Tell The Air Force Story	19
CHAPTER FOUR—Support for Operations	
General	21
Command Relationships	21

Planning	22
Execution	22
CHAPTER FIVE—Training and Education	25
General	25
Training	25
Education	25
Suggested Readings	27
APPENDICES	29
A. Guidelines for Discussions with the Media	29
B. Public Affairs Plan Template	33
C. DODD 5122.5	35
Glossary	37

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This document articulates fundamental Air Force principles for the conduct of public affairs operations and provides commanders with operational-level guidance for employing and integrating those activities across the full range of military operations. Public affairs operations are an important part of Air Force information operations (IO) and, as such, should form part of the foundation upon which commanders plan and execute their missions.

APPLICATION

This doctrine applies to all active duty, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, and civilian Air Force personnel. The doctrine in this document is authoritative but not directive. It provides guidance on how to organize, plan, and carry out public affairs operations. Commanders should consider the circumstances of the particular mission along with the contents of this doctrine document before making decisions.

SCOPE

This doctrine document discusses fundamentals of planning and employment of public affairs operations capabilities that are essential to executing missions assigned by commanders-in-chief of unified commands or commanders of major commands.

CHAPTER ONE

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS AND THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

GENERAL

The Air Force conducts public affairs operations to communicate unclassified information about Air Force activities to Air Force, domestic, and international audiences. Commanders need a clear understanding of these actions so they can harness the speed and capability of communication technology to help achieve their military objectives. *As a weapon in the commander's arsenal of information operations (IO), public affairs operations use timely and accurate information to help deter war, drive a crisis back to peace, or wage war.* By disseminating information concerning aerospace power capabilities, preparations, and results, public affairs operations enhance airman morale and readiness to accomplish the mission, gain and maintain public support for military operations, and communicate US resolve in a manner that provides global influence and deterrence.

In January 1996, when military troops began deploying to southeast Europe for Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, public affairs operators set up an interview between a CNN reporter and members of a deploying unit. One airman, holding a picture of family members, expressed concern about leaving them, but assured the reporter that the unit was trained, equipped, and committed to accomplishing operational objectives. The airman's devotion to family and enthusiasm for the mission helped the US public identify with and support the deploying forces. The Service member's articulate response to the reporter was a candid statement of US resolve, a factor that can affect adversary decision making.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

Public affairs operations include but are not limited to public affairs, musical programs, radio and television broadcasting, visual information services, combat camera documentation, recruiting services, and history and museum programs.

Public affairs professionals play a key role in carrying out their commander's public affairs operations. They provide counsel and guidance about the information environment. Also, they perform a variety of functions in their role as agent for release and dissemination of official information. These functions, discussed in chapter three, include:

- ★ Internal Information
- ★ Media Relations
- ★ Community Relations
- ★ Security Review

Musical programs provide a unique contribution to commanders' public affairs operations. For example, Air Force bands capitalize on music's emotional appeal to promote morale, encourage recruitment, and build public support for the armed forces. Music broaches cultural and international barriers promoting goodwill, strengthening relations with host nations and allies, and signaling US regional interest.



Air Force musical programs continue their tradition of building public support for the military and raising troop morale. They also serve as ambassadors for the Air Force to audiences around the world.

Air Force broadcasting services create radio and television products to inform and entertain audiences worldwide. They enhance morale and influence foreign decision makers when they perform their role of providing information that demonstrates Air Force readiness, operational capabilities, and resolve to use aerospace power to meet mission objectives.

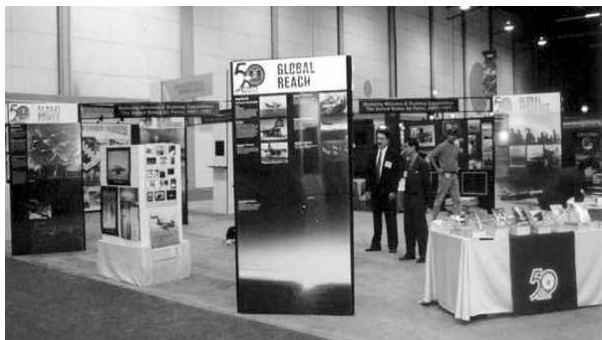
Visual information centers and combat camera teams provide commanders a valuable decision making and communication resource. Because these centers and teams document Air Force activities across the full spectrum of conflict, they generate photographic, videotape, and graphic arts products providing images useful for training, damage assessment, telling the Air Force story, and historical documentation.

Recruiting services have a significant impact on public affairs operations. Specifically, they play a large role in gaining and maintaining public support for aerospace operations. Recruiters represent the Air Force in local communities and may be the only personal interface between the Air Force and the public. They are the first step in the process of providing highly qualified men and women who ultimately enable commanders to execute military operations.



Recruiters provide information about the Air Force to the public and play a key role in gaining and maintaining public support.

Air Force historical activities support commanders with analysis of background information that places events and operations in context with the past. Using classified and unclassified sources from document collections, historical analysis can be vital for avoiding past mistakes, and it can provide guidance for future decision making. In the longer term, history publications, exhibits, and museum displays educate internal and external Air Force audiences about the nation's heritage and position as a global aerospace power. This helps enhance morale and contributes to public support for Air Force operations.



Air Force history publications, exhibits, and displays provide information to worldwide audiences about the heritage of the United States as a global aerospace power.

Commanders have a crucial role in making public affairs operations successful. They are key to ensuring open communication exists within the Air Force and outside to the public. Commanders instill trust and enhance morale by applying time-tested leadership principles (see AFDD 1-3, *Leadership and Command*) and personally communicating within their commands. As spokespersons for the Air Force, commanders play a vital role in building public support for military operations and communicating US resolve to international audiences.

GLOBAL INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

Commanders should consider the global information environment's effect on military operations. The global information environment is defined as all individuals, organizations, or systems that collect, process, and disseminate information worldwide. Neither the National Command Authorities nor the Services control such elements as media and international organizations that make up this environment. Nevertheless, these global information elements may have a direct impact on the success or failure of military operations.

Global communication capabilities make information simultaneously available from the strategic to the tactical levels of military operations. New communication technologies and the expansion of international media alliances have affected the conduct of military operations in a degree equal to that of emerging weapons technologies. Audiences in the United States and throughout the world can receive information from national leaders and the theater of operations as events happen. This is an information environment with 24-hour media reporting and instant analysis of events. The effect is that, at any moment, real-time information can instantaneously influence domestic and international decision makers. This can translate into political pressure on national leaders to make changes in strategic goals, guidance, and objectives that directly impact military missions, policies, and procedures.

Telecommunications equipment has become more sophisticated and available. Smaller, more portable, affordable, and capable telephones, computers, fax machines and other communication devices enable anyone with access to such equipment to process and transmit information. The expanding capabilities of these smaller, more mobile systems enable greater numbers of independent media representatives to transmit in real time from any area of military operations. As a result, worldwide audi-

ences, including US deployed forces and their adversaries, can receive a wide range of information from a growing number of sources. This information may be of dubious or unknown quality and may or may not present an accurate account of military operations.

The evolution of the global information environment has increased the demand and competition for information. The need to fill more channels of communication has led to broader, more frequent media coverage and created competition to uncover and report unique stories. It has resulted in more analysis and editorial commentary on military operations. Reporters want to know the impact of events and people's reactions. *Military operations are spectator events watched in real time by the US public, allies, adversaries, and, indeed, the entire world.*

Commanders use public affairs operations to assess the information environment in such areas as public opinion and political, social, and cultural shifts. Public affairs operations also give commanders the means to take preemptive and active measures to “get in front” of and shape the flow of information during military operations. Commanders face the challenge of balancing the task of informing the public with the need to maintain operational security, a traditional cornerstone of successful military planning and execution. Conventional wisdom has held that release of information will be detrimental to military operations; however, commanders should consider the possible advantage of releasing selected information. Rather than providing an advantage to an adversary, in some situations the release of information can demonstrate US resolve, intimidate a rival government, and deter military conflict.

In 1994, the United Nations authorized the use of force to remove the military dictatorship of Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras in Haiti and restore power to the lawfully elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Public affairs operations promoted international media coverage of US military preparations. A few days before the proposed invasion date, former President Jimmy Carter, then-Senator Sam Nunn, and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell traveled to Haiti in an effort to negotiate removal of the military regime. The combination of media images showing the massive invasion force and the negotiators' skills caused Lieutenant General Cedras to step down just hours before the arrival of the first US troops. This averted significant US and Haitian casualties, and Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY brought about the peaceful transfer of political authority in Haiti.

CHAPTER TWO

OPERATIONAL INTEGRATION

GENERAL

While maintaining their role as separate command functions, public affairs operations are an integral part of the commander's information operations (IO) effort. They help interpret the information environment, providing knowledge that assists in planning and adjusting to a dynamic situation. **Across the range of military operations, public affairs operations enhance a commander's ability to accomplish the mission successfully.**

INTEGRATION WITH INFORMATION OPERATIONS

At all levels of command, public affairs operations should be an integral part of the IO cells. These cells are composed of expert representatives from various activities brought together to exploit the synergistic effect of uniting their efforts to collect and disseminate information, develop IO courses of action, and coordinate and deconflict information. The cells help integrate IO activities into aerospace operations plans (see AFDD 2-5, *Information Operations*, and JP 3-13, *Joint Doctrine for Information Operations*, for detailed discussion of IO cell responsibilities).

The success of a campaign plan may depend on the information superiority achieved by coordinating and integrating all IO capabilities into a seamless effort. The composition of IO cells may vary based on the overall mission of the force, the role of IO in accomplishing the joint force commander's objectives, and the adversary's IO capability.

During every phase of contingency operations, public affairs operations should be represented on the IO team. The training and experience of public affairs professionals in dealing with the public and the media identify them as key players in achieving the commander's objectives. Their role in coordination and deconfliction of information is vital because they are the agents for releasing official information to the public.

ROLES IN INFORMATION OPERATIONS

Public affairs operations help the commander achieve information superiority, an Air Force core competency critical to warfight-

ing. Information superiority is defined by the Air Force as that degree of dominance in the information domain that allows friendly forces the ability to collect, control, exploit, and defend information without effective opposition. Information superiority may not be fully achieved without effective public affairs operations support and planning.

AFDD 2-5 defines IO as “actions taken to gain, exploit, defend, or attack information and information systems.” **All the activities that make up public affairs operations are part of information-in-warfare (IIW), the “gain and exploit” pillar of IO.** Those engaged in public affairs operations collect information about Air Force activities and transmit it to Air Force, domestic, and international audiences. These operations may also support some “attack and defend” activities of information warfare (IW) such as operations security (OPSEC), counterpsychological operations, and information assurance. Adding public affairs operations to IO planning, coordination, and execution enhances the credibility and coherence of information reaching the worldwide audience. Well-coordinated public affairs operations can play an important role in maintaining domestic trust and public support for US military operations while communicating US resolve to foreign audiences.

Information-in-Warfare: Collection and Dissemination

Public affairs operations play a key role in IIW because of their collection and dissemination capabilities. They process information from both past and present Air Force operations, making it useful for commanders. History and museum programs are the primary players in collecting information about the Air Force’s past, but visual information centers and combat camera teams also make a significant contribution. The integrated efforts of these activities often result in dissemination of historical information through publications, multimedia, exhibits, and displays. Air Force musical programs also contribute to disseminating information on the Service’s proud heritage. The products and programs from these collection and dissemination efforts can provide unique avenues to help commanders foster public understanding and support for aerospace operations. They can also be sources of information that help warfighters learn lessons from the past and make decisions that take into account the actions of former Air Force leaders and their adversaries.

Collection and dissemination of information about ongoing Air Force operations is part of the daily workload for activities such as public affairs, broadcasting, visual information, combat camera, and recruiting. By keeping abreast of current operations, responding to media requests for information, and acting as spokespersons for the Air Force, these activities support commanders in a variety of ways (see chapter three). **The information they collect and disseminate can help warfighters “get in front” of a crisis, frame the public debate, and make well-informed decisions.**

Cooperation in the exchange of information collected through public affairs and intelligence operations can help give the commander a more coherent view of military operations. Some of this information comes from similar sources, but the primary focus of their analysis is different. Public affairs operations products (e.g., analysis of international news media) may give intelligence personnel additional insight on the information environment. Likewise, intelligence products may help public affairs operations transmit clear and substantiated information. The synergy of this cooperation increases the scope and accuracy of disseminated information.

Information Warfare: Support and Deconfliction

Commanders should understand that public affairs operations, although distinct from IW, may support some IW activities. In other cases, commanders may need public affairs operations and IW functions to deconflict information before it is disseminated by either activity.

One example of public affairs operations supporting IW is OPSEC. OPSEC can be applied to any operation or activity to deny critical information about friendly operations from an adversary. A Critical Information List is developed prior to or during a contingency to help ensure that deploying military personnel and the media are aware of information considered non-releasable. While dealing openly with the media and providing accurate information, Air Force personnel must ensure the release of information about friendly operations does not adversely affect national security or threaten the safety of friendly forces. Commanders should emphasize this approach, which both protects sensitive information and meets the media's need to tell the story. Also, public affairs professionals support OPSEC activities through security review, a process

which ensures official material proposed for public release does not contain classified material and does not conflict with established policy.

Commanders can also use public affairs operations to reduce the impact of adversary IO. For example, public affairs operations can support IW activities such as counterpsychological operations and information assurance. *Public affairs operations disseminate a continuous flow of trusted, reliable, timely, and accurate information to military members, their families, the media, and the public. This capability allows public affairs operations to help defeat adversary efforts to diminish national will, degrade morale, and turn world opinion against friendly operations.* Countering such messages from adversaries can be vital to successful operations and accomplishing mission objectives.

Commanders must ensure public affairs operations are deconflicted with IW activities. For example, psychological operations (PSYOP) are designed to convey selected information and indicators to foreign leaders and audiences with the goal of influencing their emotions, motives, reasoning, and behavior in a manner favorable to friendly objectives. Public affairs operations communicate US resolve and commitment to international audiences in a manner that can shape the global information environment and influence foreign decision makers (see Global Influence and Deterrence in chapter three). *PSYOP information and information prepared for public release should be coordinated to ensure that the messages to the respective audiences are not contradictory.* Public trust and support for the Air Force could be undermined or lost if the perception develops that a spokesperson attempted to mislead the public. This could degrade the effectiveness of military operations and undermine public and friendly-nation support.

Also, commanders should be aware that, in the global information environment, some military deception information could be received by the media and the US public. They should coordinate public affairs and military deception operations to ensure that credibility of US operations and communications is retained. This also can prevent the inadvertent compromise of a deception plan. Public affairs operations can document displays of force, but force projection cannot be simulated by using false information. *Public trust and support for the Air Force is undermined, and may be lost, when any Air Force spokesperson attempts to deceive or lie to the US public directly or through the media.* Lying to the US public directly and seriously harms national security through decreased public support and lost credibility of US communications.

CHAPTER THREE

CAPABILITIES, FUNCTIONS, AND FUNDAMENTALS

GENERAL

Three major facets of public affairs operations interlace to produce the best possible support for commanders. Capabilities describe the areas in which public affairs operations directly assist the warfighter. Functions are divided into four broad, continuing activities performed by public affairs operations to support unit operations. Finally, the fundamentals of information are guidelines commanders should follow to disseminate information and effectively operate in the information environment.

CAPABILITIES

Air Force public affairs operations help support the commander in four basic areas: trusted counsel, airman morale and readiness, public trust and support, and global influence and deterrence. These capabilities are the core contributions of public affairs operations to US military might and represent a combination of professional knowledge and technical experience that can be applied across the full range of military operations.

Capabilities of Public Affairs Operations

- ✧ **Trusted Counsel to Leaders**
- ✧ **Airmen Morale and Readiness**
- ✧ **Public Trust and Support**
- ✧ **Global Influence and Deterrence**

Trusted Counsel to Leaders

Public affairs operations ensure commanders and other leaders receive candid, timely counsel and guidance concerning the impact the information environment on the Air Force's ability to accomplish its mission. **This capability includes analyzing and interpreting the global information environment, monitoring domestic and foreign public opinion, providing lessons learned from the past, and preparing leaders to communicate with the media.** This support can help commanders make well-informed decisions and forecast the possible results.

Airman Morale and Readiness

Airman morale and readiness directly translate into combat capability for the Air Force. **Public affairs operations enable airmen to understand their roles in the mission, explaining how policies, programs, and operations affect them and their families.** Because military operations often receive intense media attention, airmen must fully understand that the decisions they make, what they say, and their actions can have immediate implications. Public affairs operations contribute to lawful behavior by enhancing an understanding of the law of armed conflict and respect for the rights of noncom-

As the first troops arrived in the Persian Gulf during Operation DESERT SHIELD (August 1990), public affairs operations distributed information to the deployed forces. The Armed Forces Radio and Television Service set up portable radio stations and began broadcasting music and news to the troops throughout the region. The first issue of the *Desert Defender*, a monthly Air Force newspaper, was released just a few weeks after the first units arrived. These and many other information products provided an avenue for deployed commanders to pass timely information directly to their people. This effort informed deployed troops on events in the Persian Gulf and at home, helping to keep morale high.



By providing timely information to their Air Force audiences, broadcasters play a key role in sustaining airman morale and readiness.

batants. They also fight loneliness, confusion, boredom, uncertainty, fear, rumors, enemy deception efforts, and other factors that cause stress and undermine efficient operations.

Public opinion is everything. With it, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed.

President Abraham Lincoln

Public Trust and Support

Public affairs operations support a strong national defense, in effect preparing the nation for war, by building public trust and understanding for the military's contribution to national security and its budgetary requirements. These operations make taxpayers aware of the value of spending defense dollars on readiness, advanced weapons, training, personnel, and the associated costs of maintaining a premier aerospace force. With public and congressional backing, military leaders are able to effectively recruit, equip, and train airmen to perform the full spectrum of military operations.

Musical programs play a vital role in raising troop morale and generating public support for military operations. When World War II began, Glenn Miller was leader of the most successful "Big Band" in the United States. Too old for the draft, Miller offered his special talents to the armed forces. He wanted to "do something concrete ... that would enable our music to reach our servicemen here and abroad." His idea was to reform military music and update it to a style that troops would enjoy. The Army accepted his offer and on March 20, 1943, he became leader of the 418th Army Air Forces Band. The unit's radio program, "I Sustain the Wings," boosted Air Force recruitment. Its appearances at war-bond drives were so successful Miller feared his band would not be given a chance to support troops overseas. However, in the spring of 1944, the unit was ordered to England where it became known as the American Band of the Supreme Allied Command. It performed a backbreaking schedule of radio and concert performances. Miller broadcast 13 shows per week and his musicians performed 71 live concerts in only five and a half months. General Jimmy Doolittle, Commander Eighth Air Force, said that "next to a letter from home" Miller's band was "the greatest morale builder" in the European Theater.



Public affairs operations enable commanders to gain and maintain the support of US citizens for the armed forces. *These operations strengthen the bonds between the Air Force and public through open, honest dialogue.* Data and imagery, continuously available in near real time in the global information environment, can have an immediate effect on public support. To fight and win in the information age, commanders should develop communications strategies that foster ongoing public understanding and support of operational objectives.

Designed to enhance the public's understanding of Operation DESERT STORM, the Air Force Hotline was activated 16 January 1991 in support of US forces in the Persian Gulf region. The Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs directed the Air Force News Agency to establish and manage this operation. The hotline, activated the day before the air war over Iraq began, operated for approximately 25 days and answered more than 80,000 calls.

Global Influence and Deterrence

Commanders should employ public affairs operations to develop and implement communication strategies targeted toward informing national and international audiences about aerospace power's impact on global events. Making international audiences aware of forces being positioned overseas and US resolve to employ those assets can enhance support from friendly countries. *The same information may deter potential adversaries, "driving a crisis back to peace" before use of kinetic force becomes necessary.* When adversaries are not deterred from conflict, information revealing US or friendly force capabilities and resolve may still affect enemy decision makers. Communicating military capabilities to national and international audiences can be a force multiplier for commanders.

Air Force public affairs operations support the commander's Informational Flexible Deterrent Options—strategies that enable a commander to address issues surrounding a crisis or conflict through the use of public information. These options include:

- ✱ Maintaining an open dialog with the media
- ✱ Articulating US national (and/or coalition) policies, aims, and objectives
- ✱ Gaining and maintaining public support for the operation
- ✱ Heightening adversary awareness of the potential for conflict
- ✱ Combating enemy deception efforts

Making international audiences aware of force deployments and US resolve to employ those assets can affect foreign decision making and be a force multiplier for commanders. In early October 1994, Iraq dispatched 20,000 troops from its Republican Guard to join 50,000 regular army troops on the Kuwaiti border. Some diplomats thought the purpose was to pressure the United Nations into easing economic sanctions. General John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said this was not an “innocent exercise,” and the Iraqis’ heavy ammunitions loads and the presence of extensive supplies convinced officials that Saddam was considering another invasion of Kuwait. US and international media coverage showed aircraft deploying to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR to meet the Iraqi challenge. National and military leaders gave interviews stating their commitment to defend Kuwait. Only 10 days after the deployment began, Iraqi troops withdrew from their threatening positions near the Kuwait border.

FUNCTIONS

Four functional areas represent the broad, fundamental and continuing activities of public affairs operations: internal information, media relations, community relations, and security review. While these general categories account for most activities, they do not dictate staff organization. Public affairs operations should be organized to meet the commander’s needs with synergistic efficiency.

Functions of Public Affairs Operations

- ✧ Internal Information
- ✧ Media Relations
- ✧ Community Relations
- ✧ Security Review

Internal Information

Public affairs operations inform airmen, civilian and contract employees, retirees, and all affiliated family members throughout the Air Force’s active, National Guard, and Reserve components. **This audience should be first priority in any communication strategy to ensure maximum combat effectiveness and the highest sustainable morale, readiness, productivity, and retention.** Providing clear, complete, accurate information to Air Force people results in informed support for the Air Force mission. Public affairs operations provide the tools to help the commander respond to concerns of Air Force members and their families. Although joint task force (JTF) commanders may set up a command in-

formation function within the JTF public affairs office, Service-specific internal information remains the responsibility of the senior commander of each Service, even in the forward area.

Media Relations

Public affairs operations ensure a free flow of information to the public through the media. Wider public awareness occurs when this information reaches national opinion leaders. This effort brings Air Force issues to the public agenda and gains and maintains informed public support for the mission.



Depending on the type of operation, commanders may need to respond to information requests from local, regional, national, or international media representatives (see Appendix A, Guidelines for Discussions with the Media).

Commanders should work with local media to tell the Air Force story.

Community Relations

Commanders should consider community relations activities as a fundamental part of building public support for military operations. Public affairs operations bring together Air Force people and the civilian community through events such as air shows that feature the US Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron (the Thunderbirds), open houses, anniversary activities, civic leader tours, support for local community activities, and recruiting efforts. Effective community relations create mutual acceptance, respect, appreciation, and cooperation between the Air Force and civilian community.

Security Review

The security review program directly supports IW security activities by providing clearance and review of official information for security, accuracy, propriety, and policy. Security review helps prevent the inadvertent

release of classified material and technology transfer. It also promotes consistency in the type of unclassified information released to the public.

FUNDAMENTALS OF INFORMATION

Conducting operations in the global information environment poses many challenges for commanders. There are, however, several principles of information that can help commanders understand the fundamental concepts of public affairs operations and effectively deal with the information environment. These fundamentals complement the DOD Principles of Information (see Appendix C).

Fundamentals of Information in Public Affairs Operations

- ✧ Tell the Truth
- ✧ Provide Timely Information
- ✧ Include the Media
- ✧ Practice Security at the Source
- ✧ Provide Consistent Information at All Levels
- ✧ Tell the Air Force Story

Tell the Truth

Commanders should always use public affairs operations to provide accurate information to the public. The long-term success of Air Force operations depends on maintaining the integrity and credibility of officially released information. Lying or attempting to deceive the public can destroy trust in and support for the Air Force and public affairs operations. Public affairs operations should be properly integrated into the commander's IO plan so that officially released information does not conflict with other IO activities.

Provide Timely Information

Bad news is not like fine wine—it does not improve with age.

General Creighton Abrams
Former Army Chief of Staff

Commanders should be prepared to release timely, coordinated, and approved information about military operations. **Difficult issues and**

events that are potentially unfavorable to the Air Force should be addressed openly, honestly, and as soon as possible. Information should be released quickly, even though it may be uncomplimentary for the Air Force. Attempting to deny unfavorable information or failing to acknowledge its existence leads to media speculation, the perception of cover-up, and lost public trust in the Air Force.

During Operation ALLIED FORCE, the 1999 air campaign against the Serbian government in Yugoslavia, NATO forces dropped munitions that struck the wrong targets and killed innocent civilians. One of these unfortunate events included the destruction of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on 7 May. US and international television networks broadcasted live reports from the site of the destroyed building within hours of the bombing. NATO and DOD leaders quickly made official statements about this mistaken attack. As a result of the timely and forthright release of information, this event did not remain the focus of media coverage, nor did it distract from the bombing campaign.

Include the Media

While differences in philosophies, values, and perspectives lead to misunderstandings between military professionals and the media, commanders should not consider the media as an adversary. *Airmen can educate the media on military activities to help overcome communication difficulties, improve the media's understanding of military operations, and promote more accurate reporting.* Reporters covering operations should be given access to units and airmen and, whenever feasible, be included in the operation as a part of the unit. Incorporating journalists into units gives the media a unique perspective, a chance to know airmen, and an opportunity to understand and experience the Air Force.



Providing accurate and timely information educates the media about military operations and results in accurate reporting.

Practice Security at the Source

All Air Force personnel—military and civilian—are responsible for safeguarding sensitive information. **As a source of information, every individual should be aware of operational security issues, whether being interviewed by a reporter or sharing information with a spouse or a friend.** The speed with which information passes through the global information environment makes censorship of military operations impractical, if not impossible. Therefore, it is all the more important that information should be approved for public dissemination before it is released.

Provide Consistent Information at All Levels

Commanders should strive for the release of consistent information at all levels of command. One effect of the global information environment is that the public can simultaneously receive information about military operations from a variety of military units. Sources in theater and at the Pentagon are often quoted in the same media reports. Conflicting statements or inconsistent information can cause skepticism and undermine public trust and support. **Commanders should ensure the Air Force puts forth a consistent message through its many voices. Information should be appropriately coordinated and in compliance with official DOD, supported command, Service, and major command guidance before it is released to the public.**

Tell the Air Force Story

Every member of the Air Force family should help provide accurate information about the Air Force and its operations to the public. **Commanders should educate and encourage their military and civilian employees to tell the Air Force story by providing them with timely information that is appropriate for public release.** They may become spokespersons for the Service and, in some cases, may be considered by the media to be more credible sources than commanders or senior officials. By projecting confidence and commitment during interviews or in talking to family and friends, airmen and civilians can help promote public support for military operations. Telling the Air Force story can contribute to mission accomplishment, communicate restraint, indicate perseverance, and serve as a deterrent.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUPPORT FOR OPERATIONS

GENERAL

The capabilities, functions, and fundamentals of public affairs operations remain the same whether units are at home station or deployed. **When supporting deployed operations, personnel engaged in public affairs operations should be sent early into a theater. Dramatic media coverage at the outset of military action can rapidly influence public and political opinion and affect strategic decision making.** Therefore, commanders should deploy individuals such as public affairs professionals, visual information technicians, combat camera teams, and broadcast experts with the first units to ensure timely, accurate reporting and documentation of the operation. They also can help the commander interpret the information environment from the start of an operation and adjust decision making accordingly.

COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

Within Air Force units, the commander is responsible for public affairs operations, which are carried out using the capabilities, functions, and fundamentals discussed in chapter three. **Air Force units assigned or attached to a joint command are subject to Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OASD(PA)) guidance and are under the command of the joint force commander.** In overseas areas, each US embassy has a country team that oversees public affairs operations to ensure they support established country plan objectives.

During joint operations, the supported command has direct command of assigned forces and specified control (operational control/tactical control) of attached forces. *The internal information program is the responsibility of each Service, even in a forward-deployed area.* An overall public affairs operations communication plan should be developed by the joint community and reflected in the public affairs annex to the operation plan or contingency plan; however, separate but mutually supporting plans also should be developed for each level of command.

The joint commander will normally establish a Joint Information Bureau (JIB) to provide guidance and supervision for media relations.

Unless the JIB also has set up a command information function, internal information initiatives should be coordinated with the Commander, Air Force Forces (COMAFFOR) public affairs professional and provide support for Air Force units in the forward area and at home. Forward area community relations in a contingency will usually fall within the scope of a civil affairs plan (see JP 3-57, *Doctrine for Joint Civil Affairs*).

PLANNING

Air Force public affairs operations, through direct-liaison authority, support informational objectives of the National Command Authorities, the DOD, federal agencies, the Military Departments, state and civil authorities, combatant commands, joint task forces, major commands, and subordinate units. Responsibility for coordination and deconfliction of planning and operations rests with the subordinate command public affairs staff.

Planning for public affairs operations is driven from DOD and must be conducted at all levels of command and for operations across the spectrum of conflict. **Planning for public affairs operations by OASD(PA) and combatant commanders guides efforts at lower echelons of command.** Planning by subordinate units should be based on the assessed information needs and opportunities of their commands and should be consistent with the plans and objectives of higher commands.

Planning for public affairs operations is reflected in two types of documents: communications plans (see Appendix B) and operation plans. Commanders oversee the development of communications plans, which should exploit all activities available for carrying out public affairs operations. These plans focus on strategic and tactical communication. Strategic plans provide direction for long-range communication efforts concerning the organization's mission and objectives, while tactical plans direct communication on specific operations, events, or issues. In operation plans, commanders should identify the tasks and resources required to achieve their informational and strategic communication objectives in a public affairs annex. Public affairs issues and requirements should be included in all aspects of peacetime, wartime, and contingency planning.

EXECUTION

Commanders ensure public affairs operations are able to support contingencies from bare base operations to establishing a combined

or joint information bureau (CIB/JIB), the focal point for interface between military forces and the media. The primary goal is to expedite the flow of accurate and timely information about the activities of US and allied forces.

Commanders should understand that effective public affairs operations at the joint task force level may require close contact between the US military, the Department of State (DOS), and other US government agencies. Normally, an executive order defines agency responsibilities, functions, and interagency relationships. Either the senior DOS representative or the US commander will be assigned overall responsibility for US activities in the area. Also, public affairs operations can, and often do, work in concert with agencies outside the Air Force, including other Services, allies, government agencies, and private organizations.

In foreign countries, the President of the United States normally acts through an ambassador or chief of mission, who relies on a country team comprised of representatives from various agencies assigned to the embassy or mission. The country team is concerned with matters involving public affairs operations and other activities that may affect the attitude of the host-nation populace. Therefore, **commanders should require coordination of major public affairs initiatives with the country team to ensure release of consistent information supporting US national interests and command objectives.**



Portable equipment allows video production and dissemination of information at locations worldwide.

CHAPTER FIVE

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

GENERAL

Training and education play an important role in preparing commanders for public affairs operations. These leaders should, at a minimum, have a broad understanding of key processes to be used during public affairs operations and related activities. In addition, commanders need to know how public affairs operations contribute to information superiority.

TRAINING

As the leader of public affairs operations, the commander is responsible for communicating the unit's vision, mission, and objectives to its people and the public. The commander requires a thorough understanding of the information environment as well as the capabilities, functions, and fundamentals of public affairs operations. Various Air University courses for commanders address these considerations. **Commanders also may require media training so they understand guidelines on the release of information and develop interview strategies and skills needed to excel in the media spotlight.** This training is generally available through major command public affairs staffs and Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs. In addition, commanders may benefit from just-in-time training prior to meeting the media. This training prepares them with strategies for dealing with the interview environment and readies them to effectively articulate their answers and cope with sensitive questions.

EDUCATION

Because each person has a role to play in public affairs operations, the Air Force incorporates relevant training in public affairs into professional military education programs and products. Professional military education pursued at the appropriate time by officers, enlisted members, and civilians will provide a broader understanding of public affairs operations in warfighting. Professional military education courses teach the effects of public information on military operations and the importance of integrating public affairs operations into their plans. These lessons are effectively applied and learned when public affairs operations are integrated

into exercises and wargames. Courses that offer this education are taught through Air University; the College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE); and the Air Force Wargaming Institute. Membership in professional organizations, such as the National Association of Government Communicators, the Public Relations Society of America, the International Association of Business Communicators, or the Society for Military History, provides valuable educational experiences for public affairs operations personnel. In the end, every airman should understand that public affairs operations are an integral part of IO and a key enabler of the Air Force core competency of information superiority.

Suggested Readings

AFDD 2-5, *Information Operations*.

JP 3-13, *Joint Doctrine for Information Operations*.

JP 3-53, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*.

JP 3-58, *Joint Doctrine for Military Deception*.

JP 3-57, *Doctrine for Joint Civil Affairs*.

JP 3-61, *Doctrine for Public Affairs in Joint Operations*.

Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 5122.5, *Principles of Information*.

APPENDIX A

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MEDIA

Taking the time to prepare adequately is essential in ensuring effective discussions with the media. Central to the process is identifying the information that will be released and ensuring that the information is based on prevailing public affairs guidance and operations security. Commanders, briefers, and public affairs professionals should be aware of the basic facts of any operation and sensitive to the various consequences of communicating them to the public.

Security at the source serves as the basis for ensuring Air Force members do not release information that may jeopardize operations security or the safety and privacy of joint military forces. Under this concept, airmen meeting with the media are responsible for ensuring that no classified or sensitive information is revealed. This guidance also applies to photographers, who should be directed not to take photos of classified areas or equipment, and any other members of the media staff who could collect information.

Throughout an operation, commanders and public affairs professionals must continually assess information to determine whether or not it may be released. In joint operations, the following categories of information are usually releasable, although individual situations may require delaying release:

- ★ The arrival of US units in the commander's area of responsibility once officially announced by the DOD or by other commands in accordance with release authority granted by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. Information could include mode of travel, date of departure, and home station or port.
- ★ Approximate friendly force strength and equipment figures.
- ★ Approximate friendly casualty and prisoner of war figures by Service. Approximate figures of enemy personnel detained during each action or operation.
- ★ Non-sensitive, unclassified information regarding US air, ground, sea, space, and special operations, past and present.

- ✧ In general terms, identification and location of military targets and objectives previously attacked and the types of ordnance expended.
- ✧ Date, time, or location of previous conventional military missions and actions as well as mission results.
- ✧ Number of combat air patrol or reconnaissance missions and/or sorties flown in the operational area. Generic description of origin of air operations, such as land or carrier-based.
- ✧ Weather and climate conditions.
- ✧ If appropriate, allied participation by type (ground units, ships, aircraft).
- ✧ Conventional operations' unclassified code names.
- ✧ Names of installations and assigned units.
- ✧ Size of friendly force participating in an action or operation using general terms such as "multiple-battalion," or "naval task force."
- ✧ Types of forces involved (e.g., aircraft, ships, carrier battle groups, tank and infantry units).

Classified aspects of equipment, procedures, and operations must be protected from disclosure to the media. In more general terms, **information in the following categories should not be revealed because of potential jeopardy to future operations, the risk to human life, possible violation of host nation and/or allied sensitivities, or the possible disclosure of intelligence methods and sources.** While these guidelines serve to guide military personnel who talk with the media, they may also be used as ground rules for media coverage. The list is not all inclusive and should be adapted to each operational situation.

- ✧ For US (or allied) units, specific numerical information on troop strength, aircraft, weapons systems, on-hand equipment, or supplies available for support of combat units. General terms should be used to describe units, equipment, and supplies..
- ✧ Names and hometowns of US military personnel
- ✧ Any information that reveals details of future plans, operations, or strikes, including postponed or canceled operations.
- ✧ Information and imagery that would reveal the specific location of military forces or show the level of security at military installations or encampments. For datelines, stories will state the report originates from

general regions unless a specific country has acknowledged its participation.

- ★ Rules of engagement.
- ★ Information on intelligence activities, including sources and methods, lists of targets, and battle damage assessments.
- ★ During an operation, specific information on friendly force troop movement or size, tactical deployments, and dispositions that would jeopardize operations security or lives. This includes unit designations and names of operations until released by the joint force commander.
- ★ Identification of mission aircraft points of origin, other than as land or carrier-based.
- ★ Information on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of weapon systems and tactics (to include, but not limited to, enemy camouflage, cover, deception, targeting, direct and indirect fire, intelligence collection, or security measures).
- ★ Specific identifying information on missing or downed aircraft or ships while search and rescue operations are planned or under way.
- ★ Special operations forces' unique methods, equipment, or tactics, which, if disclosed, would cause serious harm to the ability of these forces to accomplish their mission.
- ★ Information on operational or support vulnerabilities that could be used against US or allied units until that information no longer provides tactical advantage to the enemy and is therefore released by the joint force commander. Damage and casualties may be described as "light," "moderate," or "heavy."
- ★ Specific operating methods and tactics (e.g., offensive and defensive tactics or speed and formations). General terms such as "low" or "fast" may be used.

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PLAN TEMPLATE

TITLE

1. PURPOSE

A short statement of the operational objective.

2. SITUATION

A summary of what led to the need for this plan.

Background: Background may include, but is not limited to, summaries of baseline metrics, statistics, focus group results, and research literature.

Current Situation: (Self-explanatory).

Assumptions: Events or opinions that could affect the communication plan's outcome.

Limiting Factors: A factor or condition that, either temporarily or permanently, impedes mission accomplishment.

Competing Interests: A description of opposing viewpoints.

Supporting Interests: A description of supporting viewpoints.

References: A list of governing directives, legal considerations, and current guidance.

3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The communication effects to achieve and outline of steps to reach those goals.

4. AUDIENCES

Targets.

5. THEMES AND MESSAGES

Overall ideas to communicate and statements supporting those themes.

6. STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

The game plan to communicate the themes and messages. Events that execute the strategy, including the timeline, tools, resources, media, and tasked organizations.

7. EVALUATION

Evaluation includes the measurements, feedback, or crossfeed to be used to observe effects, as well as adjustments to be made during or after implementation of the plan.

8. ATTACHMENTS

1. Essential support documents as needed.
2. News releases.
3. Fact sheets.
4. Public affairs guidance.
5. Responses to queries.

APPENDIX C

DODD 5122.5

Enclosure 2 Extract, Principles of Information

E2.1.1. Information will be made fully available, consistent with statutory requirements, unless its release is precluded by current and valid security classification. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act will be complied with in both letter and spirit.

E2.1.2. A free flow of general and military information will be made available, without censorship or propaganda, to the men and women of the Armed Forces and their family members.

E2.1.3. Information will not be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the government from criticism or embarrassment.

E2.1.4. Information will be withheld only when disclosure would adversely affect national and operations security or threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces.

E2.1.5. The DOD obligation to provide the public with information on its major programs and operations may require detailed public affairs planning and coordination within the DOD and with other government agencies. The sole purpose of such activity is to expedite the flow of information to the public. Propaganda or publicity designed to sway or direct public opinion will not be included in DOD public affairs programs.

Glossary

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFDD	Air Force doctrine document
CADRE	Air University, the College of Aerospace Doctrine Research, and Education
CIB	Combined Information Bureau
DOD	Department of Defense
DODD	Department of Defense Directive
DOS	Department of State
IO	Information Operations
IIW	Information-in-Warfare
IW	Information Warfare
JIB	Joint Information Bureau
JTF	Joint Task Force
OASD/PA	Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs
OPSEC	Operations Security
PSYOP	Psychological Operations

Definitions

community relations. 1. The relationship between military and civilian communities. 2. Those public affairs programs which address issues of interest to the general public, business, academia, veterans and Service organizations, military-related associations, and other non-news media entities. These programs are usually associated with the interaction between US military installations and their surrounding or nearby civilian communities. Interaction with overseas non-news media civilians in a wartime or contingency theater will be handled by civil-military operation (CMO) with public affairs support as required. (JP 1-02.)

Combat Camera. Visual information documentation covering air, sea, and ground actions of the Armed Forces of the United States in combat or combat support operations and in related peacetime training activities

such as exercises, war games, and operations. Also called **COMCAM**. (Approved for inclusion in the next edition of Joint Publication 1-02.)

information-in-warfare. Involves the Air Force's extensive capabilities to provide global awareness throughout the range of military operations based on integrated intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) assets; its information collection/dissemination activities; and its global navigation and positioning, weather, and communications capabilities. Also called **IIW**. (AFDD 2-5)

information operations. Actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems. Also called **IO**. (DODD S-3600.1) The Air Force believes that in practice a more useful working definition is: *[Those actions taken to gain, exploit, defend or attack information and information systems and include both information-in-warfare and information warfare.]* {Italicized definition in brackets applies only to the Air Force and is offered for clarity.} (AFDD 2-5)

information warfare. Information operations conducted during time of crises or conflict to achieve or promote specific objectives over a specific adversary or adversaries. Also called **IW**. (DODD S-3600.1) The Air Force believes that, because the defensive component of IW is always engaged, a better definition is: *[Information operations conducted to defend one's own information and information systems, or to attack and affect an adversary's information and information systems.]* {Italicized definition in brackets applies only to the Air Force and is offered for clarity.} (AFDD 2-5)

joint information bureau. Facilities established by the joint force commander to serve as the focal point for the interface between the military and the media during the conduct of joint operations. When operated in support of multinational operations, a joint information bureau is called a combined information bureau or an allied press information center. Also called **JIB**. (JP 1-02.)

military deception. Actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary military decision makers as to friendly military capabilities, intentions, and operations, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission. (JP 1-02)

public affairs. Those public information, command information, and community relations activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the Department of Defense. Also called **PA.** (JP 1-02)

public affairs operations. Operations that communicate unclassified information about Air Force activities to Air Force, domestic, and international audiences. The capabilities they give the warfighter include: providing counsel and guidance about the public information environment; enhancing airman morale and readiness; gaining and maintaining public support for military operations; and communicating US resolve in a manner that provides global influence and deterrence.

public affairs operations activities. Activities that include: public affairs; musical programs; broadcasting; visual information; combat camera; recruiting; and history and museum programs.

psychological operations. Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives. Also called **PSYOP.** (JP 1-02)

security review. The process of reviewing news media products at some point, usually before transmission, to ensure that no oral, written, or visual information is filed for publication or broadcast that would divulge national security information or would jeopardize ongoing or future operations or that would threaten the safety of the members of the force. (JP 1-02)

